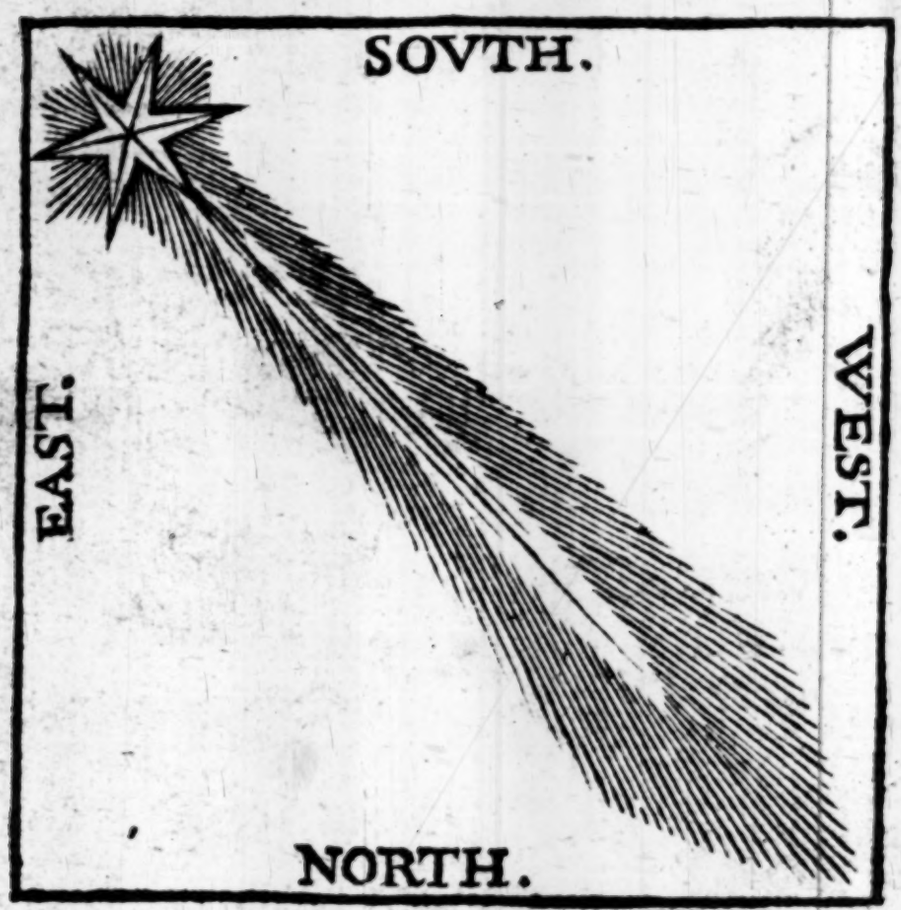
A TREATISE OF BLAZING STARRES IN *Generall.*

As well ſupernaturall as naturall: To what Countries or *people ſoeuer they appeare in the ſpacious world.*



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A

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A Prognoſtication of Blazing Starres, according to the opinion of the Poet *Pontanus*.

OF ſtirring winds, with bluſtering blaſts which blow,
Of bloody broyles, by force in fatall fight:
Of peoples pompe, the pitious ouerthrow.
Of Potentates the death, in wofull plight:
The Blazing Starres aloft like lampes of light
In th'Eſt or Weſt of azure coloured skies,
Forewarnings and ſignes when they ariſe.

If ſtill they ſtand, and offer not to change
The place, where firſt in ſight they caſt their beames,
Then ſhall inſue much miſchiefe rare and ſtrange:
As gaping wounds, and ſluzing bloody ſtreames,
In foughten field, twixt nigh adioyning Realmes,
Such ciuill ſtormes ſhall ouerrunne the land,
That ſome ſhall bath in kindreds blood their hand.

And if they take their courſe vnto the Eaſt,
A ſigne it is that forreigne foes with force
Prepare apace, to ſpoyle both moſt and leaſt:
With edge of ſword ſweet life ſtill to diuorce
From panting heart, deuoyde of all remorſe.
Thus Eaſt or Weſt in ſight, they haue their dome,
And ſignes they are of things in time to come.

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Why, and whereupon Blazing Starres haue theyr Names,

CHAP. I.

FOrsomuch as a man furnished with all kind of knowledge and learning, should so search after the vnderstanding of great and high matters, that he haue not meaner things in contempt and disdaine, by whose benefite (as experience teacheth) the greater are attained, because they minister certain helps and aides to aspire and reach vnto them. Hereupon it followeth, that lesser things are not to bee neglected, without the which there is no passage to the greater, nor any possibilitie to pearce to the perfect proofe of them, except by the forerunning of them, preparation be made for vs to ascend. and climbe vp to the hidden knowledge of the other. Therefore, lest this our labour lent and layde out for common vtility and profite should be subiect to the biting blowes of furious enuie, and lest such as desire perfection in profession, as also certainety in deliuering Doctrine, should complaine, that wee sell shadowes for substances, phantasies for verities, and imaginations for demonstrations: we will say somewhat in the entrance of this worke, touching the name of a Comete or Blazing starre, and so passe orderly to our purpose.

A reason for vnderstanding of blazing stars.

The starre which the Grecians call Cometa, the Latines Stella crinita, we Englishmen a Blazing starre, hath his denomination (as well by the assertion of the one, as the other from the form and figure which it beareth, at such time as it appeareth in the ayre: because this kind of starre seemeth (in our opinion and iudgement) to shoote out long strakes of fire in the Element, or bright and lightsom sparckles continued in length like

A Blazing star is named after the forme and figure which it beareth.

vnto the hayre, which the Grecians call Coma, and thereupon Cometa, and the Latines Crinis, whereof it is named Stella crinita: so that the resemblance or representation which this Starre giueth, is the occasion that it is called a Comet, or Blazing star, As Augustus Cæsar called that starre, which appeared at such time as he published Pageants of pleasure and shewes of Triumph, by the name of a Comete: and which Suetonius Tranquillus called Sidus crinitum, and diuers others haue semblably termed,

The names of Blazing stars.

Neyther was the Imposition of this name absurde, or against reason: for whosoeuer shall iudiciously behold those kinde of Starres, he shall perceyue, though not most perfectly, yet not very darkly) how it shooteth out long and slender lines of sparkling fire, this way and that way, insomuch, as a man would thinke and suppose the same not much vnlike vnto feathred hayre or a broome or a rodde of Wyrch, to the tayle of a Peacocke, to the beards of a man, &c. as we are taught by demonstration.

The likenes of blazing stars as sometimes they appeare.

That Blazing Stars are sundry and diuers,

CHAP. II.

BLazing Starres are not onely very many in number, but also diuers in appearance. The Sect of the Stoykes haue sayde, that they are beyond two and thirty, of whose sundry names and seuerall effects, Abienus not vnwisely hath written.

The Stoykes opinion of blazing stars.

Concerning their number and names, we are heare to be not curious: wherefore we will come to their colours and likenesses wherein there is not an vniformity and generall agreement, but a difference. For some blazing-Starres seeme bloud redde, horrible to behold, and (as it were) crisped and curled in the Crowne or vpper part, tending towards the Skies: whereupon they are commonly called Comets. of which the Poet hath this saying:

Blazing stars diuers colour.

Like as in moyst and dewie night,
When Comets red as bloud,
Appeare aloft: the spectacle,
and signe is little good.

This

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This figure haue they, when they are thicke on the one side, and stretched out in length on the other side.

Some Blazing Starres there be, which haue a certayne hanging downeward at their lower part, in the likenesse of a long beard, or the mawne of a horse: which happeneth by reason of the thin matter and substance which is in the other parts, which kind of starrs are called Pogonii. Blazing starrs vary in figure, Trailed starrs.

Other some there are, which appeare in the likenesse of a speare or Iauelin, and they are called Acontij or such a one as testifieth Plinie, did Tiberius Cæsar, in his Consulship, penne passing and excellent Poems, or Verses of notable inuention and singular conueyance. Speare starrs.

Other some there are, shorter somewhat then the former, and they be shapt towards the top like a sword, whereupon they are called Piphij, resembling in colour gold after a sort, but yet so notwithstanding, that (of all other) they are most pale, wanting beames, blazes, or strakes: hauing neuertheles a certain brightnesse in them, like the glittering of a sword. Sword starres.

Other some there are which are called Phitites, in forme and fashion like a Tunne, hauing in the hollow part of them the shew of a smoaky and smothering flame, much like vnto the Blacke-Smiths Forge, or vessels daubed and smeared with pitch, set on fire, which cast a darke and mistie light, and men haue sometimes vsed for the preseruing and fresh keeping of their drinke. Tun starres.

There are besides them that we haue reckoned Comets called Certarij, because they appeare to our sight in the similitude and likenes of a Horn: Such a one was seene, when the Grecians encamped at Salamina. Horne starres.

Other some also there are, which be called Lampades, because they cast a shew of a burning torch, or flaming Lampe of which sort sundry haue beene, and that not very seldome. Lampe starrs.

Furthermore, some there are which be called Hippei, because they seeme to haue about them (as it were) a Horse Mawne, going round about them in circle wise, with strange moouing and swiftenesse. Mawne starrs.

To be short, some Blazing Starres are seene in the Ayre, glistering with strakes and streames like bright siluer, that it passeth the ability of mans eye to looke and behold them, where-

in (as in a cleare glasse) God is represented, in the likenesse and shape of a man. And such a one (as some do hold opinion) was that which appeared to the Wisemen in the East, and conducted them to the place where Christ was borne: concerning the appearing whereof, thus sayde he to the Hierosolomites. Wee haue seene his starre in the East, and are come to doe him worshippe.

A Blazing star representing as it were in a glasse, the Image of God.

But touching this, we purpose (peraduenture) to say somwhat in the winding vp of this worke. We know not that besides these which we haue rehearsed, there be many more formes and figures of Comets or blazing starres, and many more sorts, of which particularly to discourse, is not our meaning or entent, nor yet a matter of such weight and importance, that it should require present and perfect handling: we will therefore to that which is more necessary.

In what part of Heauen blazing starres appeare most commonly.

CHAP. III,

In what part of heauen Blazing stars are seene.

They that haue written things notable, and profitable of Astrologie, and haue discoursed things concerning the influences and gouernments of Starres, in such sort and order, that the knowledge issuing from their trauels, offereth fruit not deserning repentance: They (I say) haue affirmed, that Blazing Starres neuer appeare in the West part of Heauen: but either vnder the North, in some one part or other, but vncertaine: howbeit, most commonly in that bright and cleare part, which is called the Milkie Circle: or else (which is seldome seene come to passe) they appeare in the South Pole, but yet without any blazce, in the seasons of Winter especially: yet it is recorded, that a Come appeared to the Aethopians, and to the Aegyptians, and that the King of those people, gaue that Blazing Starre a name, calling it Typon, because it had in it a double resemblance, namely of a round ball, and of a fire, in so much, that according to the iudgment of sense, it might not so aptly be called a Comet or Blazing Starre, as a fiery or flaming ball, or a round compassed and burning knot.

At

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At what time of the yeare blazing starres appeare, and how long they continue.

CHAP. IIII.

ALthough Damascene (an Authour in my iudgement worthy reuerence) is of opinion that a Blazing starre, is a starre newly made and created for the time present, which vanisheth out of sight, and ceaseth to appeare, when the thing whereof it is a signification is accomplished, and come to passe: yet notwithstanding, experience (whom writers name, the Mistresse of many mysteries) informeth and teacheth vs, that a Blazing Starre may appeare at any season of the yeare: but more often in summer and then specially, when the starre called Canicula ariseth, and ruleth the weather and time of the yeare, according to the proportion of the influence, and that they continue seuen dayes at the least, and not aboue fourescore at the most, the authoritie of Plinie, giuing countenance to this opinion.

Howbeit, this assertion, together with the testimony of Plinie may be improued by examples: For (as it is vniuersally known) a Comet, which appeared before the ouerthrow of Hierusalem, was seene blazing in the Element, to the wonderfull astonishment of the people, by the space of a whole yeare, as Eusebius and Iosephus verified.

But we must note, that this Comet, and the appearance of the same, which was full of horror, is not to be ascribed vnto Nature, but to be attributed immediatly vnto God, the Father and founder of Nature, although the sect of the Pythagorists thought, that all Blazing starrs were to be referred vnto Nature who hath prouided that their appearing should be at certaine definite, and appointed times of the yeare.

The opinion of the *Pythagorists* touching Blazing starres.

Touching these Blazing Stars also, of the same sect there was some, who supposed they were perpetuall starrs, and not temporall, and that they had an ordinary course to run, as other starres haue their reuolution and circular motion, and that their appearing proceeded from none other cause, then when they were, forsaken and left of the Sun, whose brightnes and nearenesse is the occasion as they thinke, that Blazing starrs do not appeare.

Whereof Blazing starres are engendered (according to the iudgement of Diuines) and what they are indeede.

CHAP. V.

The Religious Diuines, like very well of this plausible and true opinion, that Blazing starres come of no other cause, then from the holy Counsell and Prouidence of God; that there is no matter of their generation, as Phylosophers imagine, but that God maketh them immediate messengers and Ministers of his will, according to the time and place, as it best pleaseth his hie and eternall Maiestie: (that by them) he might giue vs aduertisements of afterclaps, to prepare our selues onward to meete his fatherly mercy, or to suffer the bitternes of his sharpe iudgement. Whereupon they inferre this consequent, that Blazing Starres are supernaturall, and meere wordes wonder.

Originall of Blazing starrs.

To whose Sentence I agree, and most willingly assent, being thereto moued by arguments of forcible perswasion, and in number infinite. Principally, because it is a Christians duety, to ascribe more to Gods prouidence, then to the force of Nature, whō God hath not onely Created, but also doth dispose and gouerne.

Yet for all that, I may not vtterly deny, that they are natural, for so much as I am not (or at least ought not to be) ignorant, that Nature causeth blazing starres; howbeit so, that God is the Originall and principall worker of such wonders. and that their ground and causes are naturall, and not so secret and doubtfull: but that otherwhile the capacity and reason of man may conceiue and compasse them. And yet contrary wise, I stand not in deny-all, that those blazing starres are supernaturall, which the most mightie Monarch of the heauens, Creator of all creatures, and Maker of all Starres and Spirits, raiseth of nothing to something, vpon a sudden, in a moment and pricke of time, to the admiration of all men, and to the reueal ng of his Omnipotency.

Some Blazing starres natural, othersome supernaturall.

Expedient and necessary it is to beleeue, that with God all things are in ability, and that whatsoeuer is done eyther by day, or by night, naturally or supernaturally, it commeth to passe by his appointment, and that it pleaseth him otherwhiles to create something of something, and otherwiles againe, something of no-

All things are possible to God.

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nothing. To that which neuer had matter, can he giue fashion and figure, and beautifie that with formes and comelines, which neuer had Foundation nor being. It consisteth in his might to moysten the earth with showres distilling from the cleare skies, without the meanes of lowring and dropping cloudes. He can worke both wayes, to whom nothing is impossible: Now gathering the cloudes together in an heape, from the vttermost corners and coasts of the world, now turning againe lightning into raine, which couering the heauens with cloudes, and preparing raine for the land: For, Great is the Lord, mighty is his power, and of his wisdome there is no number or end: And therefore I am easily drawne to beleeue, that Blazing Starres may immediately appeare from God, and be supernatural, when it pleaseth God, vpon (some singular cause) to giue them beginning, matter, and substance of nothing.

Such a Blazing Starre (no doubt) was that Piller of the cloude, whereby the Lord (in olde time) most miraculously went before the Israelites his people out of the Aegyptian Soile into the Land of Promise in the day time: and that Piller of fire, which neuer left the face of Gods chosen in the night.

The piller of the cloud, and the piller of fire were Blazing stars supernaturall.

Not vnlike to this was that Blazing starre (as I suppose) which threatning destruction to Ierusalem, was of no lesse continuance then terrour, enduring the space of a whole yeare, which is not proper to naturall Blazing stars.

The Blazing starre which appeared in Ierusalem, was supernaturall.

To conclude, as well Diuines as Philosophers and Astronomers affirme thus much in this case, that alwayes, in a maner, Blazing stars doe arise of causes naturall, albeit the Lord God is the principall author and worker of them, as in the Chapter following it is euident.

Whereof Blazing starres do engender; according to the rules of Philosophers; and the Canons of Astronomers, and what they are in deed.

CHAP. VI.

COncerning Blazing starres I finde some disagreement betweene Philosophers and Astronomers. Anaxagoras and De-

Democritus saide, That a Blazing starre was nothing else but a certaine bright shining in the Element, procured by the coniunction of two starres: To which opinion, I my selfe of late did somewhat incline and leane.

Otherseme also there were, which supposed a Blazing starre to be but a certaine dimme and darke light compassed, and (as it were) cloied vp in a cloud. Other some seyd, that it was a cloud purged, and purified from earthly matter and grossenesse, which receiuing light from the other Stars, casteth abroad cleat strakes of brightnesse, smal and slender, like vnto hayre, or fine wrought flaxe,

Otherseme againe, thought a Blazing starre to be but a certaine cloude, kindled and set on fire with a hote flaming clearnes whose opinion Aristotle semeth to haue fauoured, who supposed that a Blazing starre did consist of a drye vapour, which being drawne vpward into the highest ayre, is there set on fire: and that this blazing starre taketh substance of earthly exhalations, very hote, dry, fat and clammy: which being carryed into the vpper region of the ayre, is there kindled and burneth: to whom all Philosophers (in a manner) of this our age haue subscribed, and some Astronomers also, who with Aristotle thinke no lesse, then a blazing star to be but an earthly vapour, somewhat thicke, fast and fat in substance, like oyle or birdlime which being drawne vpward, nie to the Spheare of the fiery Element, and touching the hollownes of the Orbe or circle, is then by heat rarified, made thin and set in a flame: so that by the consent and mutuall agreement of these two sects (although some doe vary) it is concluded that a Blazing star is engendred and made of Ayre, set on fire, by reason of the nerenesse of the Element of Fire, that Ayre contayneth in the matter and stuffe of a blazing starre, and that the Ayre next adioyning, and being by the element of fire, is called a Blazing starre, and is no lesse indeed then it is named. Which representeth the colour of fire to our eyes, because the drie vapour in it is kindled, burneth, and lasteth with the light of the flame, which is moued to and fro, by the vnder ayre: where vapours of like nature, quality and substance arising, giue continuance and length thereunto; whereby it purchaseth the name, after which it is vsually called.

Aristotle his opinion of Blazing starrs, and their generation.

Vpon-

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Upon this agrée our late Philosophers, in a manner all, counting the doctrine of Aristotle, worthy credite and subscription: although as well the sect Stoicall vary therefro, affirming Blazing starres to be but ordinarie Starres, not differing from other Starres which appeare in the Ayre, and to bee aboue thirty and two in number, not as also they, which hold this for a veritie, blazing Starres to be perpetuall Starres, and to keepe a limited course or compasse, but neuer to blaze and glister in the Ayre: saue when they are left and forsaken of the Sunne, whose clearenesse dimmeth and dampeth vp their brightnesse, that it can neither appeare nor be perceiued. And they in like sort, which leane to this opinion, that blazing starres, be Starres, hauing their certaine appointed times of appearance.

The opinion of the Stoicks touching Blazing Starres.

Now, as I dissent not from the first, those I meane, whose opinion draweth nearest to reason and trueth, so I varie not altogether from them, who hold opinion that a blazing starre may bee supernaturall, and also naturall', and that the same taketh generation of a fat humour, and of fiery force, whereby it is dissolued, and at the length consumeth.

Whereupon this consequent is to be inferred, that we cannot call a Blazing Starre properly a Starre, but Catachrestically, as we may so terme them, I meane (vsing in our phrase of speech) a certaine abuse: although Augustus Cæsar (whereof we haue giuen a caueat in the beginning of this our Treatise) called that Blazing Starre, which appeared at such a time as he published his Pageants of Triumph, by the name of a Starre: and which vsurped name also Suetonius applyeth to selfsame thing: they both adding vnto it this word Crinitus, which we also, with no lesse abuse then they, call Blazing.

This Blazing Starre aforesayd, which appeared in the time of Augustus Cæsar, and shined so gloriously, some imagine, and suppose, to be the selfe same starre which directed the Wisemen to the place where Christ was borne. But I cannot allow of this opinion, and why I do so much mislike thereof, the reasons in the next Chapter following, do declare. In the meane season, I would not wade into wonders aboue my capacitie, lest I wander in wildernesses of doubts, but I desire rather to be wise with soberneſſe.

An erronious opinion misliked and improued.

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Whether the ſtarre which conducted the Wiſemen to the place where Chriſt was borne, were the Blazing ſtarre, whereof the Emperour Auguſtus did ſpeake, calling it by the name of a ſtarre.

CHAP. VII.

Chriſtian duty admoniſheth me, in few words to make mention, what maner of miraculous and ſtrange Starre that was, which (after a rare and wonderfull fashion) lead the Wiſemen vnto Chriſt being in his infancie. Which ſome men (verie raſhly, and with want of aduiſement) coniecture to be the Blazing ſtarre, which appeared, and caſt a great light at the ſame time, that Auguſtus Cæſar made ſhewes of great pompe and ſolemnitie, whoſe ariſing was in the North part of heauen, about the eleuenth houre of the day, and continued (as Plinie playnely teſtifieth) ſeuen dayes ſpace full and complete.

Of which thing, although Picus Mirandula hath not godly and gracely diſcourſed: yet thinke I, that it is my duety, compendiouſly to reaſon, what in this point may be maintained, without hurt or preiudice. And ſo much the rather, becauſe I would not ſæme in this matter, to fauour the Aſtrologians, for ſo much as they ſwarue as farre from trueth, as the world is wide, and the heauen is high.

Concerning the Starre, I mean that which appeared at Chriſt his natiuity, the Euangeliſt, whoſe euidence is tryed with the touchſtone of trueth, writeth in this wiſe. *Eidomen gar ton Aſtera autou en te anatole.* Among all which word of this clauſe, penned, by the finger of the Euangeliſt, the Latine interpreter turneth this word *ton Aſtera*, Stellam, learnedly (no doubt) and truely. The Euangeliſt yet againe ſaith thus. And, behold, the ſtarre which they ſaw in the Eaſt, went before them, vntill by approching, it ſtood ouer the place, where the babe was.

For we haue ſeene his ſtarre in the Eaſt.

By

By these testimonies, it is apparant and manifest, that neither Aster, nor Astron, doe signifie a Blazing-starre. Whereby the errours of Phichon and Harpocrates, are convinced, who also deemed that the Starre which shewed and shined in the East, and was the Wisemens direction to Iudæa, was the selfsame Blazing Starre, which in the time of Augustus Cæsar (as is aforesayde,) so gloriously glistered: when it is as evident (as the Sunne shine at noneday) how that Blazing-Starre appeared many yeares before the Nativitie of Christ, and arose in the North part of heauen: whereas the Starre (which was the wisemens guide into Bethlehem (appeared in the East.

They appeared in contrary regions & at sundry times of great distance: ergo they were different starres.

Furthermore, what man would so sone be allured to believe that a Blazing Starre would be thought of the Wise men, a thing of such certaine and infallible Prognostication, that the arising and proceeding thereof, should embolden them to commence such tedious iourneyss, and to attempt so many weary labors: wherein they might bee of this opinion and iudgement as well, that the Blazing starre gaue foreknowledge of something else, besides the Nativitie and byrth of the King of the Iewes.

Wherefore it is more credible, that these Wise men followed the Starre which then appeared, eyther vppon perswasion of the booke which Seth compiled: or else by the motion of Balaams prophecie: for that they were of the kindred and affinitie of him, as some hold opinion: Or else by the ministery of Angels, or by Heauenly inspiration, or else by admonition & warning given in slæp, which might (why not?) giue them vnderstanding as wel of this, as it gaue them knowledge (afterwards) to avoyd the presence of Hreod, and to returne another way into their countrey, and not the same by which they came.

No man is able sufficiently to declare the errenious opinion of Iulianus, that irreligious reuolter, who affirmeth this Starre (which hee calleth by the name of Asaph, according to the opinion of the Aegyptians) of custome and wont, to appeare euery foure hundreth yeares, and that it betokeneth many things both marueilous and mortall.

Iulianus the Apostata his opinion, as repugnant to reason & veritie refuted.

But tell me (if thou canst) thou false Prophet and peruerse Apostata, if thou wilt haue thine opinion, carry away-

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countenance of trouble? How commeth it to passe, that those Wisemen must attained to the vnderstanding of that Starre, and the determinate arising of the same, at a definite and appointed time, but that they then came to the intelligence thereof, when it was within the contemplation and view of their eyes? How commeth it to passe, that the appearance thereof was so far from horror and mortalitie, and that it gaue presignification of ioy, that to them was borne the King of the Iewes? And if it be effectuall to worke wonders, and to compasse strange and prodigious euents, why then did it not euery foure hundred yeares (by succession, season and degrees of times) prognosticate some semblable thing, like vnto that which was cõmunicated to the knowledge of the Wisemen? why did it not, after a thousand, fiue hundred and thirty yeares, or within the compasse and reuolution of that time, bring forth a new King to the world, or som other rare and wonderfull effect, to kindle in the hearts of men, manifest admiration? or else if it suffered an Eclipse or depriuation of that singular qualitie, and so become drye, barren, and vnfruitfull: why did it not appeare still, though weakened in working, but lost vtterly and for euer appearance in the Heauens.

A question to good purpose.

Thou (I warrant) therefore, and wandrest farre and wide from the sincere truth, and giuest a witnesse of thy pertinacy to all people, and of thy foule impiety towards God, in that thine owne opinion, which is mere erroneous, seemeth vnto thee passing plausible: thou (in the meane season) derogating from christian Religions due reuerence, and strugling with tooth & nayle to make it contemptible. But all in vaine, thou wrestles with the waues, which in the end will ouerwhelme thee in thy wilfulnesse. For, the truth giueth in a contrary verdict against thee, with the which whosoeuer haue armed themselues to encounter successe hath not beene prosperous, because they attempted combat with a mightier then themselues, and beeing ouermatched, were carried into captiuity, and cast into confusion. This Starre therefore which the Wisemen saw, was no Comet or Blazing-Star, as diuers haue dreamed, but som new star, which of purpose was appointed to expresse the prouidence of God, as in the gospell it is apparant: not being of the number & host of them, wherby [illegible] in the creation: but differing

The Authors iudgement in the vnderstanding vp of the constellation.

from all

all Starres both Fixed, Wandering and Blazing, which to bee this testimonie affoordeth authoritie: For that there bee some which are of this iudgement, and holde it for a veritie: That in this starre (as in a glasse) was included the likenes of a Childe: vnto which Opinion they might (peraduenture) be induced, by the words of the Wise-men saying: Beholde, wee haue seene his starre in the East.

It could not chuse then, but be a newe Starre, and a Starre importing a myracle: For so much as neyther the selfe same, nor any like vnto it, euer appeared in the former ages, nor at any time shined in the skies for the space of a thousand fiue hundred and thirty yeares, after the Nativity of our comfortable Sauior, Being I say, a starre by the grace of God created, for the execution of his message, whose pleasure being accomplished it consumed, vanished, and was no longer obiect to the eye-sight of men being causall and temporall, not naturall and continuall.

But of this Discourse sufficient is sayde, as well for the improuing of vnsauoury opinions, as also for the discouering of the infallible truth requirable in this present purpose. Now will I make a retrogradation, and returne to mine arguments, concerning Comets or Blazing starres, hauing thought my pen not vnfruitfully occupyed in this last particular.

Whether Blazing starres proport and foreshew some strange & wonderfull thing to follow.

CHAP. VIII.

IT is called in controuersie, whether Comets commonly termed Blazing-starres proport any prodigious thing and worlds wonder. Some in this behalfe seeme to bee resolued, and make their answere in this sort: That as Blazing starres are rare & seldome, so they signifie some thing that is rare and very strange, vnto which opinion they cleaue, being thereunto drawn partly by dayly experience, and partly also lead by the causes from the which they set their originall.

Blazing starres are signes of some strange thing to come

And to say the plaine truth, when haue Blazing starres cast their glimmering beames, and lightned the eyes with their glistering brightnesse: but something hath followed, contrary to

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common course, and farre otherwise then by vsuall and accustomed order is receyued? Why then should not Blazing starrs as they are rare, so inferre and draw with them rare effects? And why should we otherwise thinke, then that by their generation also, some strange thing is signified: seeing that other Starres shining in the firmament, are thought not onely to haue beene created for the seruice of men: but also for the distinguishing of times and seasons, of dayes, monethes and yeares, and for other ends also, which are priuy onely to Gods secret counsell: especially for that our Lord Iesus, iudged not the superstitious Pharises (notwithstanding his sore denuntiations of woes against them) altogether deseruing reprehension: nor vtterly blamed the Sadduces for their diligent obseruation of the Weather, & marking the face of the Firmament giuing iudgement: that if the coulles of Heauen were such and such, then semblable to bee the surces of the seasons. As, if it were couered with red clouds in the euening, that then men should be in expectation of the next dayes bright clearenes. Which ceremony of theirs purchased in processe of time such credite and beleefe, that it grew into a common and familiar Prouerbe:

The Pharisies & Saduces not altogether condemned for their due and precise obseruation of the weather.

What man can say of certainety.
The Euening this doth signifie.

CHAP. IX.

The good and euill which Blazing starrs doe prognosticate, and betoken.

As it is receyued for an vndoubted truth, that Comets carry with them a Prognostication of some strange wonder: so on the other side, it hath beene precisely noted, and by due obseruation confirmed, that they threaten some eminent euill & mischiefe: for which consideration a Blazing starre was called, a signe of Heauen, A Token of great feare, by which name excellent men, Authors (I meane) or Writers of singular learning and iudgement haue termed it. Not that the Blazing starr is to be feared, as if it could doe harme vnto man, but because the omnipotent God, and guide of the heauenly hoast, by the same (as by a burning beacō) giueth vs warnings & watchwords

of

of afterclaps and punishments: and to assure vs, that he it is, and none besides him, that is vniuersally to be feared, not with a seruile, but with a filiall feare. Considering, that he hath peremptory power ouer the whole man, body and soule, vpon which parts he consisteth: and is of ability to iudge vs to temporall chastisement for our amendment, or else to condemne vs to eternall destruction, as instruments of reprobation.

But to returne to the Prognostications of Comets or Blazing Stars, it is found by authority, that in the time of Charles the Emperour, surnamed, the Great, a Blazing Starre appeared, in the contemplation whereof, the Emperour hauing his eyes earnestly bent, and considering profoundly thereupon, at length he was rapt into a great astonishment, touching the signification of the same. And sending for a Phylosopher, named *Eginard*; conferred and reasoned to and fro with him about this Starre, saying in conclusion, that the appearing thereof did threaten vnto him some miserable calamity. Which the Phylosopher hearing, to the entent that the Emperour should not be more amazed then néede required, hæ rehearsed the saying of the Prophet in these words: *A Signis cœli nolite metuere*, Feare yee not the signes of Heauen, and let not the visions of the firmament strike terrors into your hearts. Which sentence the Emperour not misliking, gaue him thanks for that comfortable counsell, saying: That he remembred the dutie of a Christian man to bæ this, namely, to stand in feare of nothing, but onely of him, who both created vs, and also this Starre. Which notable speech of so famous an Emperour, giueth a sensible instruction, why a Blazing starre may be called a token of terrour, or a signe of horrible feare. Plinie also (many yæres past) affirmed, a Comet to bæ a terrible Starre, and so inclined to destruction, that it deserued to be called mortall: as in the ciuill commotion, which was in the time of Octauius his Consulship, and also in the warres betwæne Pompeius and Cæsar, many probabilities are to bæ gathered, or rather, many verities to bæ touched. To the words of which, Plinie, Virgill (the Prince of all Poets and Plinies Predecessor) alludeth in this wise:

A blazing starre threatneth destruction.

More flashing flames of lightnings cleare.
From cloudes shine not below:

Nor

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Nor Blazing ſtars, whoſe burning beames,
Somefatall fall doth ſhew, &c.

And the ſame Poet in another place, inſerteth theſe wordes.

Strange ſtarres did ſhine from skies in darkeſome night,
And flakes of fire did fill the Ayre with light:
A Blazing ſtarre with ſiluered ſtrakes did ſhine,
And made mens hearts for feare away to pine.

Whom the Poet Lucane imitating, and ſetting before him, as a preſident, for the obſeruation of order, vſeth theſe tearmes and Phraſes of ſpæch in his Poems.

Not Blazing ſtarre with glimmering ſtrakes of light,
And lengthned haires of colour red and white,
Which brings to men (as many make report)
Deſtruction dire in lamentable ſort.

Whereby it is to be gathered, that thoſe kinde of Writers were not ignorant, that a Comet or Blazing Starre, did moſt commonly preſignifie and foreſhew ſome imminent miſchiefe, which in tract of time came to paſſe, and thervpon grew in vſe to be called, A terrible or fearefull ſtarre.

The miſchiefes which Blazing ſtarres forewarne to enſue.

CHAP. X.

FOr ſo much as it is declared already, that Blazing Starres alwayes ſignifie nothing elſe, then the approaching of ſome pernitious and miſchieuous thing, likely after to enſue: it remayneth, that this queſtion be demaunded. What manner of euils they be, where Blazing Starres are præmonſtrations, and foretokens? Whereunto I make this anſwere: That as Blazing Starres are diuers, ſo are their effect and euils which they ſignifie not all one, but ſundry and differing. And forſomuch as the variety or diuerſitie of them is to bee conſidered: therfore it is neceſſary, that the effects which follow ſuch cauſes, bee ac-

accordingly conjectured.

Some hold opinion, that it is to be marked, which way Blazing starres shoote their light, because (say they) that part of the earth seemeth to bee threatned, towardes which the Comet casteth his beames thickest and most directly. Againe, it is to be noted, from what starre they receyue their force, and whence proceedeth their influence, what things they resemble, and represent in likenes, and in what places they appeare. The obseruation vsed of some at the appearing of Blazing stars.

Furthermore, to touch the effects of Blazing starres, experiences manifold and innumerable haue sealed this for a trueth, that sometimes they signifie barrennesse of the earth, sometimes the sickenesse of the plague and pestilence, sometimes dearth, and scarsitie of victuals, sometimes great windes and tempests, sometimes extreame heate, sometimes Earthquakes, sometimes the flowing of waters beyond their bounds and banks, to the drowning and hurt of the land, sometimes seditions, insurrections, cruell commotions, tumults and battels, sometimes chaunge of Kings and Kingdoms, alterations of common wealthes, and such slaughters as seldome are seene: with many more calamities infinite and innumerable: insomuch that Lucane the Poet thought it no matter of doubt, but of assured certainety, to call a Blazing starre, such a Starre as changed the state of Empires, and wrought the alteration of principalities. His verses follow in this order. The effects which haue followed Blazing stars proued true by experience.

Strange Starres were seene in darkesome nights,
The Heauen was on a flame:
And flakes of fire like burning brands,
Sore sights in skies did frame.
The fearefull Starre which blazeth bright,
And spreades his beames abroad,
And changeth Kingdomes in the World,
In th'ayre aboue abode.

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Sundry examples and testimonies, declaring the diuers and manifold mischiefes, which haue followed the appearing of Blazing starres.

CHAP. XL,

LEast any man should thinke this more fabulous, and a bery forgery, because I haue sayde thus much, and that vpon the opinion and authority of other Writers, that diuers Blazing starrs presignifie and giue a forewarning of diuers mischiefs and euils like to come, it seemeth vnto me an enterprise worthy my labour, to set downe in a few words, and the selfe same agreeing with the true reports of Histories, the assertion aboue mentioned not to be imaginacious or faigned. Wherein it shall not seeme a matter depending vpon necessity, to runne through all particular examples, and to make an vniuersall repetition of testimonies from the Worlds Creation, (which passeth the capacity of my wit to comprehend, because they excede in multitude) But it shall rather be sufficient, and much more profitable, out of many to gather a fewe, and such insede, as Authors (most worthy of credite) haue set downe in their Workes and Treatizes.

A short enumeration or rehearsall of mischiefes which followed vpon the appearing of Blazing starres.

And first of all to beginne with the noblest Writers, and best approued: Who is ignorant, that after the appearance of a Comet in the time of Iulius Cæsar, not onely ciuill warres followed, in manner most lamentable, but also the death and murthering of Iulius Cæsar his owne person, which was most miserable? who being 56. yeares of age, was assalted, and set vpon in a conspiracie of 60. Princes and more, among whome were C. Cassius, Marcus, and D. Brutus, and being goared through and slaght with 23. wounds, in the Court of Pompeius despitefully perished, whereof P. Virgilius, Lucanus Plinie, Suetonius Appianus, Plutarchus, and diuers other Writers of great authority are witnesses.

What should I linger long in the repetition of those strange tempests, of snowes, hayles, inundations of waters, and other like calamities, that followed the appearing of the same Blazing

zing Starre: Which F. Horatius doth not nakedly describe, but singularly set downe with a kinde complaynt.

Who knoweth not, what an vnspeakeable desolation, and wonderful ouerthrow of Hierusalems City, followed after the appearing of a certaine Blazing Star, which was seene in the ayre, (Iosephus and Eusebius faithfully affirming no lesse) by the space of a whole yeare, burning with flames of lamentable destruction?

The selfe same miserable massacre and desolation followed shortly after this Blazing Starre, which the Lord himselfe, the Father of all mercy, and Iudge of all reuengement, did not onely foretell many yeares, ere it came to passe: but also wept for very sorrow of heart, as he was prophesying to Ierusalem, her sharpe Visitation. For our Sauiour Christ (as the Euangelists testifie) beholding the City, wept ouer her, and sounded as it were, in her eares this sorrowfull sentence: If thou haddest known (saith he) in that thy day, those things which belonged to thy peace, and now are hidden from thine eyes, &c.

Did not the death of that most godly and religious Emperour Constantine, follow and ensue the appearing of a Blazing Starre, which was seene Ann. Dom. 304. being of an vnaccustomed bignes, & of no lesse horror to behold? And did not thereupon likewise follow an exceeding dangerous insurrection in the Empire, wherein (among many murthers) the Emperor Constantius was spoyled of his life in the Castle of Helena, not farre from Spaine.

A Blazing starre appeared before the Emperour Constantine.

In the yeare 444. a Blazing starre was seene, which as it gaue prefigurations & foretokens of afterclaps, so did there ensue most miserable slauters & calamityes, specially in France, and not long after Collen (being assalted & besieged of the Hunnes) was ransackt, spoiled, and made euen in a maner with the ground: and the most Catholicke Emperour Martian, was in a conspiracy of his owne subiects (contrary to the religious oath of alleagiaunce) murthered and made away at Constantinople.

After the appearing of a Starre, in the yeare of our Lord, 584 there followed such an inundation of waters, in euery place of the land, that it was auerred and beleeued, a second deluge or vniuersall flood, to haue beene prepared for the drowning of the whole World. After that ensued in Italie, so hote a pesti-

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hence, that within the compasse of a little time, many thousands dyed in manner most lamentable. Not long after that, Rome tasted of the whippe: for the Lombards laying siege against it, made hauocke thereof out of measure. Upon the tayle of which sharpe punish ment, there followed a worse: for the Sarazens rose vp with sterne lookes and bending browes, compelling the third part (almost) of the World which professed Christianity, to fall to Apostasie, and to take part with them in their damnable sect of diuelish Idolatry, and detestable vngodlinesse.

A marueilous inundation of waters, with other notable calamities forwarned by a Blazing starre.

In the yeare of our Lord eight hundred and thirténe, there was a Blazing starre séene most strange and terrible, whereupon insued the death of that most Christian Emperour Carolus Magnus. The Sarazens assaulted Italy, and with violence of sword and warlike Engines, ouercame and preuayled: not without the ruine of many a beautifull building, and shedding of much bloud.

A Blazing star appeared before the death of Carolus Magnus.

In the yeare of our Lord, 1284. there appeared a Blazing starre, which did portend a manifest shew of much mischiefe and misery: for in the yeare of our Lord, 1302. next ensuing, that memorable and bloudy battell of Flanders was fought, which to the Frenchmen principally ministred occasion of many a lamentable Alas: for in that battell, the floure of the French Armie, I meane the chiefest in place and countenance, and the gemme of all their glory, went to wracke, suffering death no lesse ignominiously then tyrannically. And after that, Rodulph the Emperour, making siege against Verona, sustained great losse of his best appointed Souldiers, the Switzers, whose bloud embrued the blades of their enemies, their bodyes lying vpon the ground grouelling and senseleslie: and the Emperour himselfe fighting against Albert D. of Austria, was slain, only Emperour elected but not crowned. Now, what manifolde miseries and mischiefes, a Blazing starre which shooteth vpward, the head hanging downeward, doth betoken, may soone be perceyued, & known by the experience of a Blazing starre, which appeared in the West, and tooke his course towards the North, which Starre was séene in the yeare of our Lord, 1363. The woes whereof this Starre gaue foreknowledge, fell vpon the Frenchmen, to their no small smart, and lamentable vnlukinesse.

Bloudy battell which followed after the appearing of a Blazing starre.

A Blazing star shooting vpwards what afterwards ensued.

For

For in a foughten field against the Turkes, howbeit, out of the compasse of the French dominion, they were discomfited and ouerthrowne, a hundred thousand of them slaine with the sword, among which number was the Duke of Burgundy, who with the rest, lost his life without recouery.

Not long after which infortunate conflict, namely, in the yeare of our Lord, 1406. Lodouicke Duke of Clarence, and brother to the French King, was murthered at Paris most trayterously, and frandulently: the losse of whose life was death and destruction to a great number.

And (that I may grow to an end) who doth not remember, what grieuous calamities did follow the appearing of a Blazing starre, in the yeare of our Lord, a thousand foure hundred threscore and twelue, in the Moneth of January, ouer Colen Eastward, to the terrour of the Beholders, and astonishment of the bearers? There followed hereupon, in the Summer next, and immediately ensuing, a marueilous heate, engendred euery where in the earth, which was of such strength and vehemencie, that in some places, the fire burst out, and cast vp with it, euen the very sand and grauell. Hereupon followed, not here and there, but euery where battels and murthers, mortall maladies, loathsome sicknesses, most noysome and infectious: yea, so horrible, that I want witte, eyther in writing to leaue them witnessed or by vtterance to make them manifest. At which time also, the right renowned Charles Duke of Burgundie, passed many warrelike aduentures, and atchieued many a Martiall exployte, to his no small commendation, and encrease of deserued prayse, notwithstanding the successe of battel is doubtfull and dangerous.

In the yeare of our Lord, 1408. there appeared a Blazing starre, which as in sight it was wonderfull and terrible, so it betokened mischiefe no lesse innumerable, then either to heare, see, or recount is most lamentable: For not many dayes after, Luycke fell, and certayne men to the number of 40. were cruelly slaine. About that time also, (the Prussians entring battell against the King of Poland, were foyled, & a slaughter, the like not heard of) made of them in the conflict. At the same time also, was the Councel at Pisa dissolued by a schisme most dãnable, the cause

Further mischiefes which haue followed after Blazing starres.

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their conuocation and meeting, being for the making and confirming of vnitie.

Thereabout also began the Church to be yll appayde, and to stand in hazard of hauocke: whose present assistent Sigismund the King of Hungarie shewed himselfe to be, in such sort with valiancie of spirit, that he might meritorcously thalenge to be sirnamed, The most Christian King. Thus farre touching the euils, yea the heapes of euils which blazing starres haue pretended obserued by experience and tryall to be true, by the euent & falling out of many misfortunes, which both long agoe, and also of late haue happened. It remaineth that we know, whether they bee not foretokens also of some good, which although many vtterly deny, yet neuerthelesse reade our further iudgement.

The conclusion of this Chapter.

Whether Blazing Starres, doe not as well betoken good, as ill.

CHAP. XII.

Hauing before declared, by reasons not a few, and proued also by examples of veritie and trueth, that blazing starres (for most part) are presignificant shewes and tokens of some mischiefe and euill: me thinkes I heare one asking me this question. Whether Blazing starres are not tokens of good, as they are signes of euill? To whom I make this resolution. First, so farre forth as blazing starres be supernaturall, there seemeth in this matter to rest no doubt: because Almighty God, in the vnsearchable profunditie of his wisedome, is wont by the appearing of Stars, to giue signes to his beloued seruants (whom no doubt he hath fore elected to saluation) as wel of ioyful newes as also of heauy tidings.

Blazing stars supernaturall signes sent from God.

For, hath he not by the rising of the Rainebow in the clouds of heauen, sealed security and want of feare to the world, from being drownd, as somtimes it was in the dayes of our great Ancients? Did he not by the retrocession and backeward going of the Sun (contrary to the order of his course) signifie vnto Ezechias, that his life shold be prolonged, and the number of his dayes were augmented? Did he not also signifie vnto all nations, that the light

The Rainbow a perpetuall assurance of Gods faithfull promise.

light was come into the World, which should shine in darkenesse, namely, Iesus Christ to bee borne for the saluation of all people: which thing hee would haue testified by the appearing of a new Orientall Starre, visible to the eyes of the Wisemen, and gloriously glittering: Euen so doubtlesse, there is no cause, why the sight of a Blazing Starre should not breede in vs, as well hope of some good, as feare of some ill, according to the place and time, where & when it appeareth, since it is sayde, Feare not the signes of heauen which the Gentiles feare; because the lawes of the people are vaine. Why then should we stand in feare of those things, which haue not in them power, eyther to do good or harme? Again so far forth as Blasing Stars are natural, it is not to be doubted, but that the appearing of them may portend, and foreshew some good: which is no hard or intricate matter to declare, as well by reason, as also by example.

Blazing starrs naturall may betoken some good.

For insomuch as blazing-Starres are made of fiue Planets, as Abienus affirmeth, namely, of Venus, Iupiter, Mars, Saturne, & Mercurie: and that those blazing starres which are made of Venus and Iupiter, are principally the best and luckyest, it cannot otherwise be, but that blazing starrs, those specially which haue their influence from Venus and Iupiter, should sometimes betoken good, and not euermore euill. An example of good credit may that Blazing starr be, which when it appeared, was iudged so happy and fortunate to the Emperour Cæsar Augustus, that then it was begun to be worshipped in the Temple of Rome, and no where also throughout the whole world: because the Emperour beginning those shewes & Pageants triumphant: was by the appearing of that starr seuen dayes continuance in the Region of heauen, put in hope and expectation afore hand, of exceeding great felicity and happinesse to ensue: which vndoubtedly hee obtained in such sort and manner, that none in regiment was counted happier then happy Augustus, as none was named better then the good Traianus.

Moreouer, vpon the appearing of that starr, there bredde in the minds of the Commonalty an opinion of great reuerence, to wit that by the blazing starr was signified, the soule of Cæsar. to bee receyued to immortality, and to enioy among the Gods aboundance of blessednes: then which signification, they beleeued no-

thing

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thing more ioyfull or comfortable. So that we see both by reason and example, that their coniecture and opinion doth not alwayes deserue belefe, which say: that blazing Starres neuer appeare, but thereafter followeth some mischiefe and ill. Touching which matter, more might be sayd to the increase of comfort, and the driuing away of despayre from the hearts of the people, then we are disposed at this time to call to memory.

To what Countries, and to what persons blazing starres doe principally betoken ill.

CHAP. XIII.

The question is asked; To what Countries, and to what people specially, blazing starres threaten mischiefe. Vnto which demand doubtlesse, I might think no certain answer can be made: because all blazing starres are not alike, neyther haue their generation from one and the selfe same cause: but some of them are naturall, other supernaturall, and proceeding from God in the height of the heauens.

Againe, they are without difference, so doubtfull in their significations, that Lucanus supposeth their influence to be so general, that the beholders of them, eyther on Sea or Land, cannot assure themselues of safety: and therefore they are vniuersally to bee feared.

Blazing stars are vniuersally to bee feared both on sea and land.

Vnto whose opinion I willingly assent, when blazing starres (supernaturall and proceeding from God) do appeare. For this is of a certainty, that it is Gods will, by them to betoken and threaten some yll, to all persons in generall, which hauing offended and done wickedly against the prescript of his holy Law; withdraw not themselues from that puddle of pollution and filthines, wherein they wallow: but continue a life laden and ouercharged with al manner of mischiefe: whom he of his singular compassion and clemencie, would reuoke from their sinfulnesse, by the vision and sight of blazing starres, as it were by horrible threatnings and rebukements, that by reforming their abominable liues, they might frame their conuersation acceptable in his sight, according to his vnspeakeable bountifulnesse, long suffering, and patience, who still looketh for repentance before he taketh vengeance. As may manifestly be gathered, by his dealing with the Hierosolimites,

whom

whom he admonisheth of their wickednesse, by a most horrible Blazing Starre, of a whole yeares appearing, dayly looking when they would be warned, and well appoynted with pretence, to preuent Gods sharpe punishment.

But touching naturall Blasing Stars, Phylosophers and Astronomers haue otherwise iudged, howbeit, neither they shall at any time arpeare without the singular sufferance of God, or some notable cause worthy remembrance. For my selfe, thus I say, that as I am not of beleefe, that they betoken and proue in working as the Astrologians dreame: So I do not vtterly condemne such as hold it much materiall, & greatly to be regarded: toward what part of the world they shoot and cast their beams, from what stars they draw their influencies and force: in what similitude and likenesse they appeare, what colour they carry, at what season of the yeare they shew, in what place, vnder what celestiall signes, and vnder what Planets aspect. For some there are, which hold this opinion (though grounded vpon no kind of reason) that a blazing starre, bearing the likenesse of a Lute, Harpe, or semblable instrument, betokeneth somewhat to Musicke and Minstrelsie, and to the followers of such vanities. So likewise when they carry this representation or that, to haue in their likenesses semblant significations.

Blazing starres nataurall appeare at Gods appointment.

Againe, other are of this iudgement, that such Blazing Starres as appeare vnder Saturne, are of a leaden colour: vnder Iupiter white: vnder Mars, red: vnder Sol, Golden: vnder Mercurie, light azur: whereupon it is thought no hard matter, to tell what they signifie in nature generally. Howbeit, to persons placed in dignity, as to Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, Emperors, Kigns, Lukes and such like as are of place and countenance in the Commonwealth, they foreshew some euill: wherein as I hold it reuerence to be silent: so were it ouermuch boldnes and presumption to be medling. What therefore may be sayd in this point, let Astronomers shew their cunning.

The colour of Blazing starrs appearing vnder Planets.

How and what way Blazing starres are forewarning of somwhat to come, and of force so to doe.

CHAP. XIV.

ALthough it may seeme diuersely and many wayes probable, that blazing-Starres foreshew somewhat to insue: yet not

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withstanding it is not necessary, that we should beléeue (as the Astrologians rashly hold opinion) that they can be signes or tokens of that thing, whereof they are no cause. For a blazing starr cannot be eyther the cause, or the effect of warre or death: albeit, it prognosticate and foreshew (as a signe from a naturall cause) both the one and the other.

It may be (I will not deny) the cause after a sort: as if that which is the cause of warre and pestilence, we suppose also to bee the cause of the blazing starre.

Blazing starrs are after a sort the cause of warre, pestilence, &c.

As when aboundance of vapours are drawne vp into the aire, which being kindled and set on fire, there followeth and ensueth the generation of a blazing starre, and infection of the aire, which breedeth plague and pestilence, moving mens minds to mutinies, through the increase and plenty of choller stirred vp in them: whereby they runne with maine force to harnesse and weapon, and so to battel and bloudshed, not feeling in them any rule of reason, restrayning them in this their rashnes. Hereupon (as it is not vnlike) spring commotions in kingdomes, and mutations of Commonwealths, then destructions: for, A realme diuided within it self, being vnable long to last, must needs come to losse.

Blazings starrs foretokens of barrennesse.

Furthermore, seeing that the generation of a naturall Blazing Starre, importeth that in some place hath beene great heate and drought, (for otherwise such store of matter as is required towards the ingendring thereof, could not be drawne vp:) it is wont to come to passe, that blazing starres doe commonly threaten barrennesse to Sandie, and not to Fenny Countries.

Blazing starrs foretokens of pestilence and mortalitie.

Now, because it is likewise knowne, that by force of Starres, many enuenomed and infectious vapours ascend, it seemeth credible that a blazing starre is a forewarning of a following pestilence, ingendred through the ayre, being choked and poysoned by vapours of such quality. By which means in like maner, drought setteth mens hearts on fire, and driueth them forward to fall at strife, brawling, battell, and bloodshed: it troubleth the brain, estrangeth the senses, and thus ariseth seditions. To conclude with the purpose, it is not greatly necessary in this declaration to vse longer delay, since I am of this beléefe, that God (of the aboundance of his loue towards vs, which is vnmeasurable) by nature, as a meane or méete instrument, causeth such and such blazing starres

to

to appeare: to the intent, that he might by them (as by premonishments and fore warnings) put vs in mind to remember, that it is time to start from sinne, and to prepare our hearts with repentance, for preuenting of those sharp and smarting whips of Gods vengeance, which by such Blazing Starres, at Gods commandement, are threatned. For he neuer or very seldome, since the creation of the world plagued any people: but he sent among them some signe thereof, for their preparation to penitence, as in holy Scriptures it is at large declared.

Why Blazing Starres do specially betoken ill to Peeres, Potentates, Rulers of Realmes and Commonwealthes, &c.

CHAP. XV.

IT is the opinion of some, though erronious, that blazing stars do specially betoken ill to Princes and great men, and to their Kingdomes also and Realmes threaten some mischiefe: in such wise, that it hath béene obserued and marked, that no blazing star almost hath appeared, but either death, or else some ill hath happned after, to some noble personage in the land; as by our former examples it is left verified: which made Lucan the Poet to write of them, in this wise:

A Blazing Starre in sight most strange,
The state of kingdomes, which doth change.

But it is here demanded, what the cause should be, that Blazing Starres do specially betoken ill to Emperours, Kings, and such like noble personages? I answer, that there is none other cause, as they suppose, so farre forth as Blazing Starres be naturall, then because such great estates and Peeres of Realmes, liuing more delicately and intemperately then other: are soner subiect and surprised with corrupt and empoysoned ayre: and so they carrying close within them, and secretly nourishing the cause of ill in themselues, being impatient and not able to indure the working of medicinable receipts, quickely perish and miscarrie.

Why Blazing starrs betoken ill to Peeres and Potentates: &c.

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But so farre forth as Blazing-Starres are supernaturall, and as they haue their procéeding and béing from the omnipotent God, it is thought this to be the cause: namely, that God is preparing a plague against them, that the blacke tents of his indignation are pitching, that the weapons of his vengeance are whetted against them, whereof he giueth forewarnings, like a most mercifull Father: to the end they might vnderstand, that the cause of this Gods iust dealing, (being sinne and wickednes,) is either in Princes themselues, or else in the people vnder their vngratious gouernment: in consideration whereof, as well prince as people might sée the horrour and abhomination of their owne sinfull liues, and flye to repentance, whereunto God so fatherly would win them by forewarnings. That according to the examples of that holy King, they may lift vp both hearts and hands to heauen, saying: Enough now Lord, stay thy hand. It is I that haue offended: it is I that haue done wickedly: as for these innocent sheepe, what harme haue they done? Furthermore, to whom doth a Blazing Star betoken somewhat to follow, if not to the King? For in that it signifieth somewhat to the Realme, it must extend euen to the person of the King, who hath the rule and gouernment of that Realme: because he is a King by his Kingdome, and because the wickednes of the kingdome, is reputed the wickednesse of the King, who either by his ensample giueth occasion of wickednesse: or else hauing power and authority to suppresse sinne in the people, neglecteth notwithstanding the due execution and administration of iustice: so that the saying of the Apostle is most certaine and vndoubted: that, All those whom God hath placed in authority, giuen preheminence vnto, are tyed to the necessity of this heauy reckning, not only to stand accountable to almighty God for their owne, but also for the soules of all such ouer whom they haue charge. And therefore right aptly spake that most wise and worthy King Dauid to all Kings, (and vnder their title, to all such as excell other in office & dignitie:) And now ye kings (saith he) vnderstand, be ye learned which iudge the earth, serue the Lord with feare, &c.

The wickednesse of the people is imputed to the prince.

A heauy reckoning for such as are in authoritie and office.

And thus farre touching this matter, which though it be but bluntly and and shortly deliuered, yet is it to be marked.

Of a certaine Blazing ſtarre which appeared in the yeare, 1531. the 19. of Sept. at Mentz, a City in Germany, and was ſenſibly ſeeene likewiſe in other places.

CHAP. XVI.

A Queſtion is asked, what that Blazing ſtarre which was ſæne in the yeare 1531. might ſignifie, and to whom it is a foretoken of ſome euill to enſue. In anſwering whereunto, I would to God, I might not tell the truth ſo directly, as I did of an Earthquake 3. yeares paſt, the effects whereof, the City of Mentz, not without trembling taſted. The Blazing ſtarre which appeared, 1531. betokens a heauie burthen of vengeance, not onely to the ſtate temporall, but alſo eccleſiaſticall: yea it threatneth a plague to the whole world. The faſhion and likenes therof ſignifieth no leſſe, for it was to ſæ to, in forme of a brœme, or a bundell of rods: which figure of a rod, we doubt, forwarneth vs of that rod, wherof the Lord ſpeaketh by the Prophet: I will viſite their iniquities with the rod, and their ſins with ſtripes. For Almighty God vſeth for more certainety of forewarning, to giue vnto ſignes and tokens, the likenelles of things ſignified, and betokened. As for example.

At what time his will was to forewarne the Iewes of the Babylonian captiuity, he ſpake thus to Ieremie the Prophet: Make thee fetters and chaines, and put them about thy necke, &c. Therby to ſignifie their captiuity. So the ſame God, gaue a ſign in the ayre of Titus and Veſpaſian, his huge hoaſt againſt Ieruſalem, to lay it waſte: armed men with ſpeares and lances, running to and fro in warlike wiſe, which though they ſaw manifeſtly, yet ceaſt they not to liue as they were wont, moſt wickedly, the vengeance of God falling vpon them, which by thoſe forewarnings was prophecied.

In the yeare, 1500, there was ſæne falling from heauen vpon mens garments, Croſſes, and there appeared in ſenſible manner, as certaine ſignes what ſhould after come to paſſe: namely, that bloudy battell betwæne the two worthy Princes Rupert the 3. ſon of Philip, Palſegraue of Rhene, and Prince Elector, and the noble Prince Albert, Duke of Bauaria: the enſignes of the one hauing blacke croſſes, & the other red: ſo that in the yeare 1504. was fulfilled that which in the yeare 1500. was foretolde

A ſtrange ſight and wonderful forewarning of a bloudie battell.

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Wherefore it is to bee feared, leſt the Blazing ſtarre which was ſæne in the likeneſſe of a rodde, threaten vnto vs that rodde which the Prophet ſpake of, where with God is purpoſed in iuſtice to viſite the wickednesſe of the people. For if this Blazing ſtarre bee naturall, wee ſhall perceyue nothing in it, which betokeneth not ſome great euill. Firſt, becauſe it blazed ſo euen from the Weſt to the North, from whence (as witneſſeth the Prophet) all miſchiefe doth proceade, hauing neuertheleſſe an aſpect into otherquarters of the world, terrible & threatning enough.

All miſchiefe commeth from the North.

It was variable in colour, ſometimetimes pale, that is, Leaden and Saturnine, ſometimes Red and Martiall. Moreouer, in ſo much as it continued (by the auerment of Aſtronomers) vnder Saturne and Mars, Planets and Signes of vnluckie influence: it ſæmeth to betoken not onely vnto one, or two Countries, but to the whole World, famine, warre, and peſtilence: for it blazed moſt terribly into all parts of the world.

Furthermore, if the ſame Blazing ſtarre were ſupernatural, and immediate from God, contrary to the courſe and order of Nature, it might not otherwiſe be thought, but that it betokened to the world much miſery and woe: for God thereby ſignified, that his vengeance was to come vpon all wicked worldlings, and vpon all ſuch perſons, as (to their impenitence) ioyne continuance in ſinne.

Now, who hath the face to ſay againſt this, that the Worlde hath taken ſuch a ſurfet in iniquitie, and is become ſo drunken in all abomination, that Gods mercy is changed into iudgement, & his patience into puniſhment, his loue into wrath, and his kindneſſe into fury: in ſuch wiſe that it may be ſuppoſed, God to ſpeake vnto vs by this Blazing ſtarre, as it were out of a cloude, in this manner: The end of all fleſh is before me. The whole earth is filled full of their iniquity, and I will ſweepe them away from the face of the earth, For they haue all played the ſtart backs, they haue walked in the by-wayes of wickednes, and are becom vnprofitable: inſomuch that there is none that doth good, no not one. Which as none can deny, ſo I thinke none dares but thus confeſſe, that the Blazing ſtar ſæne in our Horizon, betokeneth a common calamity, conſidering how iniquity doth abound in a places, and that ſinne is growne to a perfect maturity and ripeneſſe:

A ſuppoſed ſpeech of God expreſſing his wrath conceiued for iniquity.

neſſe which God of his mercy giue vs grace to amend, that we fele not the heate of his conſuming anger, whereof hee hath ſent vs a forewarning.

Whether ſuch euils as Blazing ſtars betoken, may by any meanes eyther be preuented or auoyded.

CHAP. XVII.

IT remayneth (moſt puiſſant Emperour) the premiſſes conſidered, that your Maieſty taking the King of Niniuie for an example, riſe vp from your ſeate of Royalty, and putting on ſackcloath together with vs your people, lift vp our hands and hearts to heauen, praying to God moſt heartily, like humble ſuters.

Now who is ſo blunt of iudgement, and dul of vnderſtanding that ſeeth not that the confeſſion of offences, the repentance and contrition of heart, the humbling and ſubmitting our ſelues both in ſoule and body vnder the mighty hand of the omnipotent God, will pacifie and aſſwage the fiercenеſſe of his fury, and ſo ſpare vs in compaſſion, through vnfained repentance, that wee periſh not as outcaſts from his fauour.

Why ſhould we not haue this hope and confidence in God, conſidering that to the penitent Niniuites he did not ſhutte the gates of his compaſſion, but ſeing their conuerſion and forſaking of ſinne, with the denyall of themſelues, and all goodnes in them, he receyued them againe to mercy, from which by their ſinnes they were before excluded.

God doth not exclude the penitent from the throne of grace, but receiueth them to his mercy.

Furthermore, it is not needful that we ſtand in feare of the celeſtiall Signes, becauſe without God they haue no power at al to preuayle againſt any people; but being his ſeruants, are at his commaundement, from whom all ſtars and all creatures haue their office and miniſtery. To conceyue terror and feare therefore at the appearing of a Blazing ſtar, as betokening ſome euill like to follow, it is extreame madneſſe: let vs rather tremble at his almightines, and feare the conſuming flames of his iuſtice, who is the Creator and maker, not onely of Blazing ſtars, but alſo of the Sunne, Moone, and Planets, yea of reaſonable man.

And let vs not thinke, but that God, who framed the whole

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whole World, the heauen aboue, and the earth below, is able (as he made them) ſo to rule them: for at his commandement are all things within the compaſſe of the Heauen, be they Starres, or whatſoeuer elſe: ſo that he can, according to the greatneſſe of his power, which filleth all places, change and diſpoſe them, after his owne pleaſure: yea the threatning tokens of his iudgement and vengeance, will he turne into forbearance and forgiueneſſe, if we penitently neglect not (as did the Iewes) the time of our Viſitation: For they being warned by many wonders, and among others, by a Blazing ſtarre, of no leſſe horrour then continuance: lay ſlugging in the Couch of ſecurity and careleſneſſe, and not regarding the threats of God for ſinne, eyther of wilfull blindneſſe, or ſtout ſtubbornneſſe, counted theſe tokens of Gods vnſufferable wrath, elementarie apparitions, and toyes merely contemptible.

It is good to be warned by the example of others.

But let vs not ſuffer our ſelues to be lulled aſleepe in the cradle of ſenſuality: Let vs not be drunken with the dregs of their abomination: Let not the vanities of our owne hearts ſo bewitch vs, that we fall into a ſelfe loue and liking of our owne ſelues, neglecting the proffered time of grace and louing kindnes leſt God deliuering vs euer to reprobation in his vnappeaſeable diſpleaſure, plague vs with the ſame rod of reuengement for our vngratefulneſs, wherewith he take vengeance vpon them for their wilfull ſtubborneneſſe. Which that it may not come to paſſe, let vs in time turne to the Lord, and in due ſeaſon take his fatherly admonitions, as ready meanes to lead vs to repentance and the auoyding of the ſcourge of deſtruction, wherewith he puniſheth the impenitent. From the which deliuer vs O Lord God.

To the Almighty, Euerlaſting. Inuiſible, and onely wiſe God, bee All, aboue All, and in All, all Laude, Honour, Glorie, Dominion and Maieſty for euer and euer, Amen,

FINIS.